WINGS

Long before man came to live on the islands of Hawai‘i, nature was living and surviving here. The Polynesians came and settled in Hawai‘i about 2,000 years ago. Only one bird that was brought over by the Polynesians still survives here – it is known as the red junglefowl (scientific name: Gallus, gallus) and it is a relative of domestic chickens. The Hawaiians called it moa. Yet many other birds live in our archipelago (island chain) and no where else in the world.

Now think about how the WIND carries seeds. Remember what types of seeds were easily carried by the WIND? The wind carried these seeds very long distances across the ocean before they landed here. WINGS provide another way seeds get carried to Hawai‘i. Wings belong to birds and birds played just as important a role as the wind in carrying seeds to the Hawaiian Island chain.

As birds fly to Hawaii, they carry plant seeds in three key ways. These ways are:

1.) seeds/pollen will stick to bird feathers
2.) seeds/spores are carried in a bird stomach
3.) seed/spores can be carried on or in a bird’s beak
Discussion Questions:

1. What other animals could carry seeds on land? How?

2. Think about what helped giraffes survive in the tall tree environment. What do different types of seeds need to have in order to disperse or spread themselves out on land? (What size, shape, texture, smell, taste, etc. might these seeds have?)

3. Why are different types of seeds able to survive better than others? Think about the places they land & what might make plants grow, die or change.

4. What do different types and characteristics of seeds teach us about Darwin’s idea of natural selection?

5. Why is it useful now for us to know how seeds travel and begin growing in new environments? How can this affect us in Hawai‘i today?